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### **Tyne Rivers Trust awarded fund to work with farmers**

Tyne Rivers Trust has just been awarded a facilitation fund by Natural England to work with farmers and land owners in the Ouseburn catchment and beyond. So far 38 farmers have joined the group which covers an area of over 8,000 hectares but there are still opportunities for others to get involved and join in with project.

The facilitation fund is part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme and helps land managers to improve their local environment at a landscape-scale. The Tyne Rivers Trust group will focus on reducing the risk of flooding, reducing sediment movement into the water course and improving water quality. These issues will be tackled where possible using natural flood management techniques such as improved soil structure and management, management of grasslands and strategic woodlands schemes over the whole river corridor rather than individuals working in isolation.

The Tyne Rivers Trust group is one of the biggest in the north east and is unusual in its focus on what is predominantly an urban catchment. Feedback received by the Trust from national and local assessors stated that their application was extremely strong.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

“We are committed to helping farmers better protect their land, and surrounding communities, from flooding.

“We’re already investing £15 million in natural flood management schemes across the country, making sure we protect homes and businesses as well as protecting our precious wildlife.

“This exciting scheme is a win-win and will see us build-up flood resilience while at the same time achieving some real benefits for our rich natural habitats including our ancient woodlands, grasslands and moorlands.”

Douglas Phillips Operations Director of Tyne Rivers Trust and Facilitation Fund manager said: “Urban catchments and rivers are often ignored in favor of more picturesque areas or more highly valued nature, so it is brilliant for the Trust to have a project on the edge of Newcastle, within sight of St James’s Park. Urban rivers can have a huge bearing on localised flooding which, frequently affects significant populations.

“The facilitation fund is an extremely exciting opportunity for the Trust to work with the local farming community, government agencies and the wider community to find workable solutions for the catchment which will revolve around natural flood management.”



**Image caption:** Ouseburn catchment farm

Photo credit: Danielle Anderson-Walker

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#### **Notes to editors:**

#### **About Tyne Rivers Trust**

Tyne Rivers Trust has been working to improve the River Tyne and its catchment since 2004. In that time we've reduced the number of barriers to fish migrating upstream, improved huge amounts of river habitat and improved the quality of water so that aquatic life can thrive.

Working with schoolchildren and communities that live along the Tyne, we also help future generations to understand the value of the river.

While the Tyne is now unrecognisable from the damaged, polluted river it once was, there is no doubt that there are challenges to the river's health and our work is still needed to protect and improve this important and iconic river system.